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Published in *Creating Tomorrow* – Oct. 15, 2016 – In 1990, the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering created an event that introduced young people to the basics of engineering. A year later, the College of Engineering adopted the program and added learning activities that represented its other departments for a weeklong summer camp for 16 and 17 year olds. The organizers didn't know it at the time, but they had created a longstanding USU Engineering tradition.



Dr. Jake Gunther, left, works with students at an E-State event attended by Nucor donor and USU civil engineering alum Steve Rowlan.

Engineering State, or E-State, has become one of the most popular engineering outreach programs at USU. Each year, high school students from across Utah and Idaho sign up for the camp, and many go on to major in engineering and become professional engineers.

The program is made possible by several generous donors including Rocky Mountain Power, Hewlett-Packard and Nucor. Steve Rowlan, a USU civil engineering alumnus who recently retired from Nucor, said supporting E-State creates a pathway for future engineers who he hopes will pursue engineering careers in heavy industry.



High school students from across the West participate in E-State.

"There's a lot of opportunity in heavy industry," he said. "We need engineers to help us design building components, water systems, infrastructure and the power systems that make this country."

Rowlan says it can be difficult for Nucor to recruit talented engineers because so many young engineering students are drawn to software development and computer science.

“We recognize that there’s a need for software engineers,” he added. “But there is also tremendous need and opportunity in heavy industry. We want young people to know that before they get to college, and we want them to be familiar with heavy industry and to get excited about it.”

One USU Engineering student who is following the pathway to a career in heavy industry is Colton Kilmer.

“Colton came to E-State as a high school student, he enrolled in engineering in college and now he’s interning with our Vulcraft division in Brigham City,” said Rowlan. “That’s a great example of how influential E-State can be.”

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